



PTILOPUS [STUDOR: *Gould*.

PTILOTIS UNICOLOR, *Gould.*

Uniform Honey-eater.

Ptilotis unicolor, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X. p. 136.

ALTHOUGH I have placed this species in the genus *Ptilotis*, it is more than probable that it will hereafter be found necessary to constitute it the type of a distinct form, as on a careful comparison it will be seen that it differs from the true *Ptiloti* in some parts of its structure and in the uniform colouring of its plumage; besides which, its habits and manners are also somewhat different. It is one of the many species that rewarded Mr. Gilbert's researches at Port Essington; where he states it was seldom met with in the immediate vicinity of the harbour, but that it gradually increased in number as he approached the narrow neck of the peninsula and the mainland about Mountnorris Bay. The situations in which it was usually observed were those adjacent to swampy thickets, and here it was generally seen in pairs: it appears to be of a most lively disposition, being always in motion; its actions much resemble those of the *Tropidorhynchus argenteiceps*, with which bird it often fights severe battles. When among the trees its movements are very amusing, and its agility in running upon and creeping round the branches in search of insects is fully equal to that of the *Sittellæ*. Its flight is very short, feeble and peculiar, rarely extending to a greater distance than from branch to branch or from tree to tree, and is performed with a very rapid motion of the wings; the tail being at the same time much retroverted over the back, gives the bird a most ludicrous appearance. It emits a great variety of notes and calls; frequently giving utterance to a loud chattering cry much resembling that of the *Myzanthæ*, but more often a note so similar to the well-known chirrup of the common English Sparrow, that it might be easily mistaken for the note of that bird.

The stomach is diminutive but muscular, and the food consists of honey, insects of various kinds, seeds and berries.

Lores and orbits deep brown; all the plumage brownish olive; the under surface paler than the upper; primaries margined with brighter olive than the other parts of the body; under surface of the shoulder pale buff; irides obscure red; bill dark olive-brown; naked gape fleshy white, passing into yellow at the corner of the mouth; legs and feet light ash grey.

The Plate represents the bird of the natural size.